

# MALVERN HILLS CONSERVATORS

## MEETING OF THE BOARD

13 March 2008 7 pm

The Committee Room, The Council House, Malvern

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Present:- Mrs S Adeney, Mr R J Chamings, Mr C Cheeseman, Mr R F Hall-Jones, Mr M Morgan, Mr A Myatt, Mr J Plant, Mr A J Phillips, Mr R G Roberts (Chairman), Dr B G Smith, Mr J Smith, Mrs S Thetford, Mr R Thomas, Mr D Watkins, Mr W Watts, Mr B A Wilcock.

In attendance:- Director, Administrative Officer, Conservation Officer, Yasmin Lynes (Work Placement).

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Mr M Cordey, Mrs J Kelly, Mr C Rouse, Mr C Smith, Mr M Soley, Mrs H Stace, Mr P Tuthill, Mr P Watson, Mr J Webb.

### **2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

2.1 The Chairman introduced Yasmin Lynes who was in her final week of a month's placement. Yasmin thanked MHC for giving her the opportunity of working for the organisation as part of her Bulmers Foundation Masters Degree course in Sustainable Development Advocacy. She said that during the month she had looked at the media presence and public relations part of MHC and had met the public by occasionally standing in for front line staff.

2.2 The Chairman drew attention to the itinerary of evening strolls that had been circulated and urged members to join the Director as it was a good opportunity to get to know the land managed by MHC and the issues in an informal and relaxed way.

2.3 Three Counties Show – 13/15 June. The Chairman advised that the sub-committee comprised Jennie Kelly, Richard Thomas, Pete Watson, Dudley Brook and himself. This year's theme would be wildlife and some interesting ideas had been forthcoming which should produce a good exhibition.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.** None.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

**5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES.** On the proposal of Mr Wilcock, seconded by Dr Smith, it was **AGREED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 January 2008 should be **CONFIRMED** and **SIGNED** as a true and correct record.

### **6. MATTERS ARISING.**

6.1 10.1 Management Report. It was **AGREED** that the suggestion to upgrade the sheep track from St Ann's Well to Earnslaw Quarry would be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Land Management Committee.

### **7. COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

7.1 LAND MANAGEMENT. Mrs. Thetford presented the report of the meeting held on the 31 January 2008 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Plant.

#### Arising.

7.1.1 5. Waste Management. In answer to a question, the Director clarified that it would be items classed as hazardous waste that would need to be disposed of immediately. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.2 Downs School, Colwall – Planning Application. Members were advised that Herefordshire Council's Planning Committee had approved the application against the Parish Council's wishes. This was **NOTED**.

7.1.3 12. Overground Easement Policy. In response to a request, it was **AGREED** that a report should be presented to the next meeting of the Committee explaining the process for granting easements and in particular for large residential developments.

The report was **CARRIED** nem con.

7.2 ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCES. Mr Wilcock presented the report of the meeting held on the 7 February 2008 and moved its adoption. This was seconded by Mr Morgan.

Arising.

7.2.1 Refurbishment of the Public Conveniences at the Wyche Cutting. The Director reported that confirmation had been received from Herefordshire Council that the VAT on the work would be recovered and therefore the refurbishment work had started and would be completed in sixteen weeks. This was **NOTED**.

7.2.2 12. Byelaw Offence. To be taken in committee.

The report, excluding item 12, was **CARRIED** nem con.

## **8. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES.**

8.1 Malvern Spa Association. Mr Roberts reported that currently there was a membership of approximately 100 with a very enthusiastic and active committee. Most of the refurbishment of the Wells and Springs had been carried out, including the Clock Tower at North Malvern. Opening ceremonies were being planned once all the work had been completed. As a final part of the Heritage Lottery funded project the Holy Well adjacent to MHC land was being fully restored with the intension of installing a bottling works and heritage centre. The next immediate major projects being undertaken by the Association was participation in the Malvern in Bloom and the May Day Weekend Well Dressing. A record 34 Wells were being dressed and the theme was *Malvern water, said Dr John Wall, is famous for containing nothing at all*. Forthcoming events included a talk on Dr John Wall, a day with Malvern Dowers, Well Dressers Picnic and a walk around Colwall's water historic past with James Ferguson. This was **NOTED**.

8.2 Great Malvern Town Centre Partnership. Mr Roberts reported on the last meeting held on the 18 January 2008 when items discussed included the improvements to the Library Forecourt, Trees on the island at Belle Vue Terrace and a presentation by Anthony Collis, Town Centre Co-ordinator, on 'Malvern as a Walkers are Welcome town'. This was **NOTED**.

8.3 Malvern Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Dr Smith gave a full report on the meeting held on the 1 February 2008 when matters discussed by the Committee had included:-

- its constitution
- proposed visit to the Forest of Boland to look at its scheme involving agro economists and conservation experts working together with local landowners to produce schemes to their mutual benefit
- scope for new woodland grant schemes
- funding of the AONB
- update on projects undertaken under the Sustainable Development Fund.

This was **NOTED**.

**9. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE.** The Director presented his report following the decision at the Board meeting held on the 13 September 2007 that members should consider whether to reinstate the Public Relations Committee at this meeting. The Director reminded members of the recent history and gave his reasons why he felt the present two committee structure was working satisfactorily. However as there was still the conservation/recreation issue he recommended that the Board endorsed the setting up of a Recreation Advisory Panel consisting of 4 Conservators and representatives from user groups. The adoption of the Director's recommendation was proposed by Mrs Thetford and seconded by Mr Wilcock. During discussion several members expressed concerns that the recreation panel would not be representative of all the users of the Hills and also at the loss of a committee to consider wider public relations issues. Whilst noting these concerns it was generally felt that the setting up of a Recreation Advisory Panel would be a positive move which should be reviewed after 12 months. On being put to the vote the recommendation was **CARRIED** by 13 votes to 2.

**10. URGENT BUSINESS.** None.

**11. INFORMATION.**

11.1 Management Report. The Director presented his report which was **NOTED**.

On the proposal of Mr Wilcock, seconded by Dr Smith, it was **AGREED** that the remainder of the meeting should be taken in committee as the matter to be discussed was confidential.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm

At the close of the meeting the Conservation Office gave a presentation on the land management of the Malvern Hills as part of the induction for members. This was followed by a brainstorming session to obtain ideas for ways of marking the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Malvern Hills Conservators in 2009 as well as being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1909 Malvern Hills Act.